

NATO Ministerial Meeting

THE NORTH Atlantic Council met in ministerial session in Paris on December 16 and 17, 1963. The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Paul Hellyer, represented the Canadian Government. The following is the text of the communiqué issued by the Council:

Final Communiqué

The North Atlantic Council met in ministerial session in Paris from December 16 to 17.

Ministers expressed their profound grief at the heavy loss sustained by the alliance and the whole of mankind in the tragic death of President Kennedy. They welcomed a message from President Johnson renewing U.S.A. pledges to support the alliance with all its strength and to maintain its forces in Europe.

Ministers reaffirmed their faith in the North Atlantic alliance and emphasized that the continuing strength of the alliance, the solidarity of its member states and their determination to defend freedom and to resist aggression remain essential prerequisites for the maintenance of world peace.

Ministers stressed the peaceful and defensive purposes of the North Atlantic alliance. In subscribing to the North Atlantic Treaty, the members of NATO, whether members of the UN or not, had affirmed their faith in the principles of the UN Charter and had pledged themselves to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purpose of the UN. In the pursuit of peace, the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under effective international control, remains an essential objective.

In reviewing the international situation, ministers noted that there had been no major crises since the confrontation over Cuba. They emphasized that the unity and military strength of the alliance had largely contributed to this result and to the international atmosphere now prevailing. At the same time, ministers emphasized the importance not only of seeking agreement on limited measures which would help to reduce tension but of achieving a genuine and fundamental improvement in East-West relations. They expressed the hope that Soviet policy would not limit the possibilities of making progress in this direction and reaching solutions for the problems which are the real causes of tension in the world, in particular those of Berlin and Germany. Despite recent incidents, freedom of access to Berlin had been upheld; in this connection, ministers reiterated their determination, as expressed in the declaration of December 16, 1958, to defend and maintain the freedom of West Berlin and its people.